Highlights From *May Days*, 1925

An Anthology of Verse from *Masses – Liberator* Chosen and Edited by Genevieve Taggard
(Boni & Liveright, original publishers)

Naive-in-hindsight collection of pro-communist / socialist / labor poems. I've pulled mainly the famous poets and writers, and limited the amount of political and then-topical poems. There is a lot of romance here, ironically -- actually more interesting, as were a sheaf of Christian works, of which I've only included two. Word of warning: there are a couple of poems about war and racism which are pretty raw and not for the easily-triggered.

FOG
by John Reed

Death comes like this, I know
Snow - soft and gently cold ;
Impalpable battalions of thin mist,
Light-quenching and sound - smothering and slow .

Slack as a wind-spilled sail
The spent world flaps in space
Day's but a grayer night , and the old sun
Up the blind sky goes heavily and pale.

Out of all circumstance
I drift or seem to drift
In a vague vapor -world that clings and veils
Great trees arow like kneeling elephants.

How vast your voice is grown
That was so silver - soft ;
Dim dies the candle - glory of your face
Though we go hand in hand , I am alone.

Now Love and all the warm
Pageant of livingness
Trouble my quiet like forgotten dreams
Of ancient thunder on the hills of storm .

How loud , how terribly
Aflame are lights and sounds !
And yet beyond the fog I know there are
But lonely bells across gray wastes of sea.

Max Eastman

IN MY ROOM
by Max Eastman

In this high room , my room of quiet space ,
Sun -yellow softened for my happiness,
I learn of you , Wang Wei , and of your loves ;
Your rhythmic fisher sweet with solitude
Beneath a willow by the river stream ;
Your agéd plum tree bearing lonely bloom
Beside the torrent's thunder ; misty buds
Among your saplings; delicate-leaved bamboo .
My room is sweet because of you , Wang Wei,
Your tranquil and creative - fingered love
So many mounds of mournful years ago
In that cool valley where the colors lived .
My ceiling slopes a little like far mountains.
Your delicate -leaved bamboo can flourish here .

LIBATION
by E. E. Cummings.

O Thou to whom the musical white spring

offers her lily inextinguishable,
taught by thy tremulous grace bravely to fling

Implacable death's mysteriously sable
robe from her redolent shoulders,

Thou from whose
feet reincarnate song suddenly leaping
flameflung, mounts, inimitably to lose
herself where the wet stars softly are keeping

their exquisite dreams - O Love ! upon thy dim
shrine of intangible commemoration ,
(from whose faint close as some grave languorous hymn

pledged to illimitable dissipation
unhurried clouds of incense fleetly roll)

i spill my bright incalculable soul.

HOME THOUGHTS
by Claude McKay

O something just now must be happening there !
That suddenly and quiveringly here ,
Amid the city's noises, I must think
Of mangoes leaning o'er the river's brink ,
And dexterous Davie climbing high above,
The gold fruits ebon - speckled to remove,
And throwing them carefully in the tangled mass
Of wis -wis lush and blue and lance -shaped grass ;
And Cyril coming through the bramble-track
With a big bunch of bananas on his back,
And Aleck - none could ever dive like him
Getting his scanty clothes off for a swim ,
And schoolboys from Bridge - tunnel going home,
Watching the water downward dash and foam .
This is no day -dream , there is something in it
Oh ! Something's happening there this very minute !

THE HARVEST MOON
by Richard Butler Glaenzer

Summer has given me only vinegar.
Moon , Moon , sweeten my cup !
Summer has buried me in the trenches.
Moon , Moon , lift me up !
Blot out the emptiness of noon
With dreams of beauty, Harvest Moon !

CITY GIRL
by Maxwell Bodenheim

Beneath the barren artifice of red
That hides a fertile freshness on your face
I see the hypocritical embrace
Of courtesan and virgin, each in dread
Of yielding to the other, while your mouth
Reveals their secret of uneasiness .
Your mind has listened to a northern stress :
Your heart has heard old rumors from the south .
This conflict, with its plaintive undertones,
Is like an idle phantom to your soul
Whose clear aloofness sometimes sears your eyes.
The sensual games that move your youthful bones
Are still for moments , while the distant goal
Of whispering horizons lures your sighs .

Laura Benét

GARDENS OF BABYLON
by Laura Benét

Huddled chimneys grey , forlorn ,
In the deadened light of a city morn .
Roof tops ranging, red and high ,
Tenement windows glaring , dry.
And – Flower pots !
Gaily caparisoned flower pots !
Nodding against the sky!

Fire escapes alive with the green
Of scarlet runner and Indian bean ,
Caught in a handful of black dirt
Carried home in a baby's skirt.

Flower pots!
Verdantly growing flower pots!
Lifting their blooms on high !

Jack and the Beanstalk's magic might
Vines spring up in a single night .
Old faces soften, children stare
At the slender gardens in the air .
Flower pots !
Meagre little clay flower pots!
Bring the glow of the country there!

AUTUMN AGAIN
by Stirling Bowen

Autumn again has turned the fruit stores red ,
autumn of ten - cent apples in a crate ,
autumn of yellow moons, when dawns are late .
Autumn is up for sale here . It is fed
to children , it is purple jam on bread .
And later from a ghostly field up - state
will Jack O'Lantern hop a midnight freight
for town , come grinning with his yellow head ?

Where trains bring autumn to the warehouse door
a red plum burns the dusk , a fallen spark
from distant glowing orchards. Boats off shore
lie deep with splendor though their hulls loom dark .
Where's frost and sun ! Though trains and moto
bring red , bring yellow for the little park !

AT THE GATE OF TOMBS
by Carl Sandburg

Civilizations are set up and knocked down
the same as pins in a bowling alley .

Civilizations get into the garbage wagons
and are hauled away the same as potato
peelings or any pot scrapings.

Civilizations, all the work of the artists ,
inventors, dreamers of work and genius,
go to the dumps one by one .

Be silent about it ; since at the gates of tombs
silence is a gift, be silent ; since at the epitaphs
written in the air , since at the swan songs hung in
the air , silence is a gift, be silent ; forget it .

If any fool , babbler, gabby mouth , stand up and say :
Let us make a civilization where the sacred and
beautiful things of toil and genius shall last--

If any such noisy gazook stands up and makes himself
heard - put him out - tie a can on him - lock him up
in Leavenworth shackle him in the Atlanta hoosgow
-- let him eat from the tin dishes at Sing Sing --
slew him in as a lifer at San Quentin.

It is the law ; as a civilization dies and goes down
to eat ashes along with all other dead civilizations
-it is the law all dirty wild dreamers die first
gag 'em, lock 'em up, get 'em bumped off .

And since at the gates of tombs silence is a gift,
be silent about it, yes, be silent - forget it.

IN THE SUBWAY
by Florence Ripley Mastin

The pale lipped workers do not move me so
As these complacent seekers after joy.
They never come to grips with anything ;
Their soft hands have not touched the rough of life
That brings raw blood to the surface. They have felt
No stabbing lust for beauty or bold sin .
Warm furred and decent, smiling so dreamlessly,
They hurt my heart ; their eyes, so unafraid,
Fill me with terror. God ! they know it not,
But they are wistful,-earth's most wistful ones !
The thin , dark workers, burned as though with fire,
Swaying in pallid sleep and pinched with want,
Are not so pitiful , so stark as these.

THE DRUG CLERK

by Eunice Tietjens

The drug clerk stands behind the counter
Young and dapper, debonair

Before him burn the great unwinking lights,
The hectic stars of city nights,
Red as hell's pit, green as a mermaid's hair.
A queer half -acrid smell is in the air .
Behind him on the shelves in ordered rows
With strange , abbreviated names
Dwell half the facts of life . That young man knows
Bottled and boxed and powdered here,
Dumb tragedies, deceptions , secret shames,
And comedy , and fear .

Sleep slumbers here , like a great quiet sea
Shrunk to this bottle's compass, sleep that brings
Sweet respite from the teeth of pain
To those poor tossing things
That the white nurses watch so thoughtfully .
And here again
Dwell the shy souls of Maytime flowers
That shall make sweeter still those poignant hours
When wide -eyed youth looks on the face of love .
And, for those others who have found too late
The bitter fruits thereof, .
Here are cosmetics, powders, paints , —the arts
That hunted women use to hunt again
With scented flesh for bait .
And here is comfort for the hearts
Of sucking babes in their first teething pain .
Here dwells the substance of huge fervid dreams,

Fantastic, many-colored, shot with gleams
Of ecstasy and madness, that shall come
To some pale, twitching sleeper in a bunk .
And here is courage, cheaply bought
To cure a sick blue funk ,
And dearly paid for in the final sum .
Here in this powdered fly is caught
Desire more ravishing than Tarquin's, rape
And bloody -handed murder. And at last
When the one weary hope is past
Here is the sole escape ,
The little postern in the house of breath
Where pallid fugitives keep tryst with death .

All this the drug clerk knows and there he stands,
Young and dapper, debonair
He rests a pair of slender hands,
Much manicured , upon the counter there
And speaks: " No, we don't carry no pomade.
We only cater to the high -class trade."

Babette Deutsch

PETROGRAD
by Babette Deutsch

And there was stormy silence in that city,
A silence of the unborn where it moved
In darkness, piteous, but without pity,
Tearing the body that held it, the heart that loved.
Her sides were shaken with the weight she bore ,
Dwarfing, with the huge shadow that it threw ,
Hunger and empty death and puny war :
The red hour loomed . The lunging city knew .
Her cry smote on the dawn and she was mute ;
Tossing in the bewildered agony
Of that impatient and impeded birth :
She was alone as any groaning brute .
Savage in solitary victory,
She challenges the leagued imperial earth .

MEASUREMENTS
by Hazel Hall

Stitches running up a seam
Are not like feet beside a stream,
And the thread that swishes after
Is not at all like echoed laughter .
Yet stitches are as quick as feet,

Leaping from a rocky pleat
To seams that slip like marshy ground ;
And thread - swish has a hollow sound .

Stitches that have a seam to sew
Must not forget the way they go ,
While feet that find the cool earth sweet
Have forgotten they are feet
And a laugher cares not why
His echoes have a haunted cry .
So stitches running up a seam
Are not like feet beside a stream ,
And the thread that swishes after
Is not at all like echoed laughter.

Arthur D. Ficke

ATTIC
by Arthur Davison Ficke

Firelight danced along the uneven walls.
The rooms forgot that they were old and dank .
They caught the music of your light foot- falls,
They echoed with our laughter and our calls,
They blessed the food we ate , the wine we drank .

And they grew human , tender, sweet and wise.
We loved them as we loved each other , then .
Now they are part of fading memories
As I forget your hands, your breast, your eyes.
But I can love no other home again .

Elizabeth Colwell

RETROSPECTION
by Elizabeth Colwell

Strange, how that day
You placed me on the high sea wall,
Your arm about me lest I fall ,
And turned my face in from the sea
With : " Now , then , you must look at me,"
I turned away

You are not here ,
Yet I so frequently recall
The sunshine and the old stone wall ,
The little lappings of the sea
And your blue eyes that looked at me
So sure, so clear

SONG
by Ruth Pickering

Where is the river running,
That I may wash me clean ?
Where are there larches growing,
Marigold stars between ?

For I have a golden lover
Patched of flower and sun,
Tall as the larch and straighter,
Swift as rivers run .

And I would wash me cleaner
And have my linen white,
And make his gay heart gayer
And keep his light heart light .

PORTRAIT
by Louise Bogan

She has no need to fear the fall
Of harvest from the laddered reach
Of orchards, nor the tide gone ebbing
    From the steep beach.

Nor hold to pain's effrontery
Her body's bulwark , stern and savage,
Nor be a glass, where to foresee
    Another's ravage.

What she has gathered and what lost
She will not find to lose again .
She is possessed by time, who once
     Was loved by men .

COMPLEXITY
by Judith Tractman

There is within Myself a nun ,
A creature hidden from the sun .

It likes the gray and austere lines
Of rain - splashed fields and hilled confines ;

Flinty roads that twist and turn ,
Cut through shoes that ache and burn ;

Sharp boulders grown in rusty grass
And solitary birds that pass ;

Unwavering hills that rise high
Toward a gray, relentless sky;

Humble trees in rigid rows,
Frozen white and stiff with snows ;

All these delight the Self in Me
That loves all gray severity.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

HIGH-TIDE
by Jean Starr Untermeyer

I edged back against the night.
The sea growled assault on the wave-bitten shore.
And the breakers,
Like young and impatient hounds,
Sprang, with rough joy, on the shrinking sand .
Sprang - but were drawn back slowly ,
With a long, relentless pull ,
Whimpering, into the dark .

Then I saw who held them captive ;
And I saw how they were bound
With a broad and quivering leash of light ,
Held by the moon ,
As, calm and unsmiling,
She walked the deep fields of the sky.

HARBORLESS
by Leslie Nelson Jennings

Lightly as two shell- gatherers we went down
To meet the sea, nor had we any thought
Of cargoes or adventurous keels, or aught

More distant than our little steepled town .
And then I know not how it chanced — we found
Only the sky about us, dazed and tossed
At wind's will in that world of waters — lost
As many another voyager outward bound.

The wind with an invisible finger writes
Across the silver parchment of the shore
What even the envious sea can never know
Lyrics the moon remembers, of old nights ,
Of men and laden ships that sail no more
From little ports forgotten long ago.

STAR MARKET
by Pierre Loving

Little fishwife of the stars
With your two- wheeled cart
Pushed against the curb of the Milky Way. .
The billingsgate you spill
Is both silver dew and fire,
As you hawk your moon fish
And your shiny planet trout
And your meteor minnows.
To- morrow I shall buy a meteor minnow or two,
Sit beside Orion ,
And fish for gigantic whales
Wallowing in the white radiance of other worlds.

WHEN THE SONG IS DONE
by Annette Wynne

When the song is done
And the notes all heard ,
Who can find the thrill in a plain brown bird
A beggar bird shivering out in the snow
Dingy and starved ? Must beauty go
When the song is done ?

Is there none in the wing
And none in the breast of the shivering thing
Could we bring back the notes — make them
over in red,
Color the dingy throat, breast and the head,

Would the rapture be there
And all that was fair
When the song was begun?

RUNNING WATER
by Miriam Allen de Ford

The night wind is not more lovely
Than water that runs to the sea .
A river that sings through my sleep
Is more beautiful than a tree .
I will choose for my heaven running water,
To hear it eternally.

THE PILGRIMAGE
by Louis Untermeyer

Drooping and down at heel , I see them pass
Into the fathomless Egyptian night .
A broken moon's their lamp ; its shifting light
Splintered on sand, disturbs the little ass
That stumbles on and dreams of river grass .
The father shakes and grumbles. Still and white,
The mother holds her burden doubly tight .
The blue -black sky gleams like an evil glass.

Suddenly something looms; the infant starts
And cries with terror, kicks and will not rest ;
A wave of anguish strikes three quivering hearts
Until she soothes him with her magic breast.
And so they pause , while little Jesus drinks
Beneath the eyes of an ironic Sphinx.

ANTIQUITY
by E. Merrill Root

An old Egyptian hieroglyph
Is carved upon this granite cliff :
Perhaps it tells what the dumb Sphinx
(Century -silent) broods and thinks ;
Or is a prayer to Father Nilus
Carved with some suppliant's iron stylus;

Or just some private , unofficial,
Little Egyptian's own initial
A neat , suave , B. C. joke on us
Unworthy this poetic fuss !

TO AN UNHAPPY NEGRO
by Rolfe Humphries

That's what you get for wishing you were white . —
You see pale fiends, who strike their hideous
Sadistic savage poses , and you fight
Pathetically against that ludicrous
Attempt to reinforce a crumbling might.
The things we do are sad and ominous
Of our own doom You put us in the right
With jealousy . Now rather ,—pity us !

Pity us , pity us , and have no fear
That our decadence will be any warning
To our degenerate sons. Oh , can't you hear
A merry cheerful, reassuring noise,
Musical prophecy from your black boys
Who wake up laughing early in the morning?

LEAVE ME TO MY OWN
by Lew Sarett

Oh, leave me to my own, -
One of a nameless band
Of gipsy star and silent butte and fir ,
Unglorified , unknown .
Oh , let me stand
Again, in the lavender
Of dusk , a slumbering pinion - pine
At timber - line,
Brooding of head ,
Among the ageless dead,
One with the mountain's cliff and imperturbable stone.
And when the winter winds intone
Among my boughs a dread
And melancholy sweep
Of song , and some mysterious hand
Brushes my heart
In a mournful melody , weep
No tear for me, nor moan

Pray, stand apart
From me, and leave me to my own ;
For in the blue valleys of this land,
When the after - glow
Lingers among the glaciers, I shall know
Again the calm
Of dusk, the dewy balm
Of slumber, release
From pain — and utter peace.

Oh , leave me to my own
To the wild companionship
Of firs that toss
In the windy night, and drip
Their wild wet rain upon the moss ;
To the columbine
That strives to slip
Shyly among my roots and tip
Its wine
Upon my grassy shrine.
Oh , leave me to the never -ending sleep
Of the ages as they creep
Over the soundless solitude
To the brotherhood
Of woods and streams
And waterfalls that fling upon the night
A stoney broken music from their height
Oh, leave me to my dreams.

THERE BEING NO NEW OCEANS TO EXPLORE
by Stirling Bowen

There being no new oceans to explore,
the cry “ Bonanza !” roused the world - old zest .
Big Brother Bill hugged mother to his breast
then started with a thousand brothers more ,
adventurous with pack mules after ore .
And later when the whistling trains went west
men saw the ruins of that golden quest,
here blackened camps , here one lone crazy whore.

They fled the peace of towns. They had to go .
Time could not follow them . Time's placid flight
was fixed for common things . Some only know
necessity and can not wait for night
or day or clocks to sanction how they grow.
We learn from ashes how their fires were bright .

Floyd Dell

TO EDNA ST . VINCENT MILLAY
by Floyd Dell

Child of the lightning, alien to our dust,
We seek you in the tempest : you are there ,
Drenched with the storm of beauty, gust on gust
Of poignant sweetness only you can bear.
Startled, you vanish in the darkness, fleeing
The too -close human handclasp ; you are fain
Of the caresses native to your being
Strange joys that wound intolerably with pain .

But all in vain your hands to touch the sky
Reach up , in vain your bosom to the thunders
Bared — there is only you and mayhap I
And the old, commonplace , authentic wonders
Of food and fire and bed. There's no use trying.
So back you come, and yet — Why, you are crying!

Helen Hoyt

MENAIA
by Helen Hoyt

Silently,
By unseen hands,
The gates are opened ,
The bands are loosed .

Unbidden ,
Never failing ,
In soft inexorable recurrence
Always returning ,
Comes mystery
And possesses me
And uses me
As the moon uses the waters.

Ebbing and flowing
Obedient
The tides of my body move ;
Swayed by chronology
As strict as the waters ;
Unfailing
As the seasons of the moon and the waters.

WITH CHILD
by Genevieve Taggard

Now I am slow and placid , fond of sun ,
Like a sleek beast, or a worn one :
No slim and languid girl - not glad
With the windy trip I once had ,
But velvet - footed, musing of my own,
Torpid , mellow, stupid as a stone.

You cleft me with your beauty's pulse , and now
Your pulse has taken body. Care not how
The old grace goes, how heavy I am grown,
Big with this loneliness, how you alone
Ponder our love . Touch my feet and feel
How earth tingles, teeming at my heel !
Earth's urge, not mine — my little death , not hers;
And the pure beauty yearns and stirs.

It does not heed our ecstasies, it turns
With secrets of its own , its own concerns,
Toward a windy world of its own, toward stark
And solitary places. In the dark ,
Defiant even now , it tugs and moans
To be untangled from these mother's bones .

A GIRL'S SONG
by Joseph Freeman

My Love is eloquent ; his body cries
Like trumpets in the morning ; and his eyes
Persuade me to be insolent and strong .
His brow commands me, and his lips beseech ;
His lifted head is like a battle -song;
His shoulders more articulate than speech ;
His breast more boastful than a shout ; his arms
Deeper than wisdom . When I hear him come,
Ringing with courage and with keen alarms,
His tread exalts me like a mighty drum .

THE LOST HEART
by Herbert Gorman

Is there a lost child crying in the night
   And wandering through mists that never lift?
Nay, this is nothing, nothing: close your bright
   Desirous eyes and into slumber drift.

It is not any child beneath dull skies
   That cries and wanders in a place apart...
This thing that troubles you and wakes your eyes
   Is my heart lost and crying to your heart.

CLIMAX
by Gladys Oaks

I had thought that I could sleep
After I had kissed his mouth
With its sharply haunting corners
And its red .

But now that he has kissed me
A stir is in my blood ,
And I want to be awake
Instead .

COMPARISON
by Maxwell Bodenheim

The air is light with a twinkling nimble tune
Chasing these breezes up and down the hills :
A tune that night threw behind
To be whipped into tinkling, by morning.
The sleepy sensuousness of hill -side flowers
Floats up, to fill the pauses in the song ,
And stroke the tired breezes
This is the tangled fairy - tale of our love.

IN WINTER
by Bernice Lesbia Kenyon

Always before, the clear unbroken snow
Lay from our doorway to the river -side
Trackless and plain . Our feet had never tried
The depth of it . We never sought to go
Out to the water, where the narrow flow
Wound off among tall hemlocks, bent to hide
The upper valley meadows with their wide
Branches snowed down, and young trees leaning low .
Strange that we never broke the snow, my friend .
But sought our fire and books, and day by day
Watched at a distance through the window-pane,
And never knew that there would come an end
To watching, or that eyes would seek in vain
For untracked snow along some city way.

MY VOICE NOT BEING PROUD
by Louise Bogan

My voice not being proud
Like a strong woman's, that cries
Imperiously aloud
That death disarm her , lull her
Screams for no mourning color
Laid menacingly, like fire,
Over my long desire .
It will end, and leave no print.
As you lie , I shall lie :
Separate, eased , and cured .
Whatever is wasted or wanted
In this country of glass and flint
Some garden will use , once planted.
As you lie alone , I shall lie ,
O, in singleness assured ,
Deafened by mire and lime .
I remember, while there is time.

ANNIVERSARY
by Arturo Giovannitti

Among the flock of clouds that browse the firs
The moon runs like a mystic grail of light
Between the bowed heads of the worshippers ;

The branches of the oaks swing with a flight
Of censers, and the poplars chant a psalm
Of ancient glory to the holy night.

Peace lies upon the roofs and in my palm
Your hand unclasped lies restful and secure ,
And everything is strong and white and calm ,
For we are still in love and still are poor .

Mark Van Doren

THREE FRIENDS
by Mark Van Doren

You on the bed beside me hold
One arm straight up till it is cold,
Then let it fall, the softest part
Lying for warmth against my heart.
My fingers with your fingers' ends
Play in and out ; a foot defends
Deep regions from another foot.
You turn and find my eyes. I put
A curious palm where it is seized
By a quick hand — but you are pleased ...
There is a third one in the room .

See — in the sun , where the figures bloom
Blood -red on the rug - somebody kneels ?
Time smiles at us, and rests his heels .
Outside a hundred horses graze .
He will drive on ; but now he stays.
Soon I must follow hence , and slip
Into my place beneath the whip
He smiles upon us . Come, forget!
He has not thought of rising yet.

NOT A SINGLE LITTLE ONE
by Sara Bard Field

We loved so much and met
In a meeting great as love ;
We loved so much and yet
What have we our love to prove ?
Not a single little one
To speak when we are gone .

CHILDREN
by Bernard Raymund

Finger-prints on the window,
The smear of a dog's wet nose ,
Thousands of marks on the stairway
Of clattering heels and toes—
A headlong path through the garden
To a low place in the wall
Beyond to a ring of ashes
By the boulders. That is all ,
All they have left behind them
You can search the whole place through ,
Never know what the children looked like
Or the tricks their dog could do .

THE MOTHER FOLLOWS
by Sarah N. Cleghorn

She follows the children out to play ,
And calls and clutches when they stray
The hideous, nameless house too near ,
Or in the bright saloon would peer.
When will the foolish creature learn
That these are none of her concern ?
"Go home and take care of your children."

She follows the young things to the mill ,
And rashly seeks to guard them still
From fenceless cogs that whirl and thrust
And fill the air with lint and dust.
The pay is small , the hours are long,
The fire -escapes are none too strong
Meddlesome woman ! Home again !
This is the business of the men .
"Go home and take care of your children."

At last she follows the children home,
Up to the dark and airless room ,
By noisome hall and lampless stair ;
But these are none of her affair ;
Nor should she seek to help or kill
Amendments to the Tenement Bill .
Yet now she wears upon her breast
A button with the bold request :
“ Let me take care of my children !”

Vachel Lindsay

MICE
by Vachel Lindsay

Here's to the mice that scare the lions,
Creeping into their cages.
Here's to the fairy mice that bite
The elephants fat and wise :
Hidden in the hay - pile while the elephant - thunder rages.
Here's to the scurrying, timid mice ,
Through whom the proud cause dies .

Here's to the seeming accident
When all is planned and working,
All the wheels a -turning,
Not one serf a -shirking.
Here's to the hidden tunneling thing
That brings the mountain's groans.
Here's to the midnight scamps that gnaw ;
Gnawing away the thrones.

THE POEM
by Amy Lowell

It is only a little twig
With a green bud at the end ;
But if you plant it,
And water it,
And set it where the sun will be above it ,
It will grow into a tall bush
With many flowers,

And leaves that thrust hither and thither
Sparkling .
From its roots will come freshness,
And beneath it the grass -blades
Will bend and recover themselves,
And clash one upon another
In the blowing wind.

But if you take my twig
And throw it into a closet
With mousetraps and blunted tools,
It will shrivel and waste .
And , some day,
When you open the door,
You will think it an old twisted nail,
And sweep it into the dust bin
With other rubbish .

TO A CERTAIN GENTLEMAN
by Alice Duer Miller

("Women are often tempters to sexual sin and delight
in it . . A recent report of a female probation officer
relates that some of the girls who, as we say euphemisti
cally 'had gone astray' owned to her that they enjoyed the
life of the evil house .")

It may be so , good sir, it may be so ,
Not all who sin are tempted — that we know :
It may be darker things than this are true,
And yet, upon my soul, if I were you
A man , no longer young, at peace, secured
From all that tempting women have endured
Of poverty and ignorance and fear
And joy that make youth terrible and dear,
If I were you , before I took my pen
And wrote those words to hearten other men,
And give them greater sense of moral ease
In the long score of common sins like these,
If I were you , I would have held my hand
In fire.
Ah , well ; you would not understand .

LESS DISTURBING
by Miriam Vedder

Life is less disturbing than it used to be
I can look now, and not see .
I can touch torture with a cool hand,
And not pity — nor understand .
And when wings beat at the door,
I need not open it anymore .

TO A SOAP- BOX ORATOR
by Freda Kirchway

How can we hate enough to fight?
How can we think enough to win ?
It is a reeling summer night,
And you , young man in the street- lamp's glare,
Tell us the world and all's our share .
You might as well talk of eternal sin !
What does it matter ? What do we care ?
With noises and smells all soaking in ,
And the pressing crowds and beckoning eyes. . ,
Your words come hot and urgent and wise,
But it's Saturday night — and a dime to spare !

NAMES
by Mary Field

The price of milk went up one cent,
A penny more a quart,
And a rich man made through the summer months
Five thousand more than he ort.
He made five thousand more a year,
And they called him a " wonderful financier."
The babes in the slums went up to God
Five thousand ! It startled the nation .
The Charities puzzled , they wondered why,
And began an investigation
Of what caused the babies to wither and faint
And they called the cause “ the summer complaint.”

Then the rich man gave five hundred bucks,
Five hundred bucks he gave,
To relieve the scourge of summer complaint,

And the babies' lives to save .
With five hundred bucks he headed the list ,
And they called him a " great philanthropist."

KU KLUX KLANTHEM
by Seymour Barnard

Nigger, wop and dirty kike,
Pestilences sent to blight men ,
God but rid us of your like
Us He made the world for ,—white men !

Up before the winter's sun,
At some filthy task you cherish
Lest a grimy little one
Of your comic brood should perish :

Needle, shovel , pick or hoe ,
Scarce we knew the job existed ;
Only that you slaved where no
Decent white man had persisted :

Gripped your job for those you love ,
Muddy, bloody , but unswerving ?
Rather , grabbed the place above ,
Just to oust the more deserving !

Granted , now and then you rise
From the humid heap you squirm in ,
We would boot you , were it wise,
Down again amidst the vermin .

Nigger, wop and dirty kike,
Pestilences sent to blight men,
Take what filthy jobs you like :
God rejoices in His white men !

REVOLUTION
by Anne Herendeen

If I should chance to live to see
A new world dawning gay and free,
Gardened and forested with care
To shield the lovers walking there ;
If, from my window , I could hear
Merry young mothers singing clear ;
And all the people worked with skill
At tasks they loved — I'd shout until
I broke the peace for sheer delight !
They'd put me out of there all right!

MURMURINGS IN A FIELD HOSPITAL
by Carl Sandburg

(They picked him up in the grass where he had lain two
days in the rain with a piece of shrapnel in his lungs.)

Come to me only with playthings now .
A picture of a singing woman with blue eyes
Standing at a fence of hollyhocks, poppies and sun
flowers....
Or an old man I remember sitting with children telling
stories
Of days that never happened anywhere in the world....

No more iron cold and real to handle,
Shaped for a drive straight ahead .
Bring me only beautiful useless things.
Only old home things touched at sunset in the quiet... .
And at the window one day in summer
Yellow of the new crock of butter
Stood against the red of new climbing roses.... .
And the world was all playthings.

HOME
by Olive Tilford Dargan

He came, her hero crowned ;
Neat as a lily trim ,
She put slim arms around
The hell of him.

The horror without name
He looked on night and day,
Though it met her like a flame,
Her love would slay .

Her soft hands, they should cling,
Her kisses, they should wean
Him from the strange, dark Thing
That he had seen .

And when his days grew mild,
And he said, “ You let me go.
But I forgive you , child .
You did not know ”

She yet knew not her loss.
His soul its shore would keep
And in no world would cross
To hers asleep.

NIGHT ON THE CONVOY
ALEXANDRIA - MARSEILLES
by Siegfried Sassoon

Out in the blustering darkness, on the deck
A gleam of stars looks down . Long blurs of black,
The lean Destroyers, level with our track,
Plunging and stealing , watch the perilous way,
Through backward racing seas and caverns of chill spray.
One sentry by the davits , in the gloom
Stands mute ; the boat heaves onward through the
night.
Shrouded is every chink of cabined light:
And sluiced by floundering waves that hiss and boom,
And crash like guns, the troop-ship shudders...
doom.

Now something at my feet stirs with a sigh ;

And slowly growing used to groping dark,
I know that the hurricane - deck, down all its length ,
Is heaped and spread with lads in sprawling strength ,
Blanketed soldiers sleeping. In the stark
Danger of life at war, they lie so still,
All prostrate and defenseless, head by head. . .
And I remember Arras, and that hill
Where dumb with pain I stumble among the dead.

* * *

We are going home. The troop-ship, in a thrill
Of fiery-chamber'd anguis, throbs and rolls.
We are going home... victims... three thousand
souls.

EPITAPH FOR A YOUNG GERMAN
by Edmund Wilson

Say never that the State concerns you not,
O artists, though you toil not for your sons.
See where I lie , I and my paints forgot ,
Whom Munich bred to fall by Essen's guns.

EPITAPH FOR A HOSPITAL NURSE
by Edmund Wilson

I, catching fevers that I could not quench ,
When twenty died for two that we could save ,
Was cast with sixteen soldiers in a trench ,
Glad of no meaner grave.

A THOUGHT ON PEACE CONFERENCES
by G. B. Birrel

I know the smell of warfare in a trench
Where your best friend draws flies like new dropped dung,
I sicken yet when I recall the stench
Of bloating transport mules I've slept among,
And I have crouched in water that was green
With fetid gas , and prayed to God for night,
To hide the horror of strange objects seen
That still in dark were worse than any sight.

But not one poor, torn, rotting , putrid mass
That once was man who loved , laughed , questioned, swore,
And now is carrion under crawling grass
Turns me with loathing, as earth's lords of war
Who still, like grave worms , set themselves afresh
To batten on man's long enduring flesh .

GOD'S ACRE
by Witter Bynner

Because we felt there could not be
A mowing in reality
So white and feathery -blown and gay,
With blossoms of wild carroway,
I said to Celia , “ Let us trace
The secret of this pleasant place ! "
We knew some deeper beauty lay
Beneath the blooms of carroway ;
And when we brushed these blooms aside
We came to paupers who had died :
Rough wooden shingles row on row ,
And God's name written there— “John Doe . ”

GRAVES
by Carl Sandburg

I dreamed one man stood against a thousand,
One man damned as a wrongheaded fool.
One year and another he walked the streets,
And a thousand shrugs and hoots
Met him in the shoulders and mouths he passed.

He died alone
And only the undertaker came to his funeral.

Flowers grow over his grave anod in the wind,
And over the graves of the thousand, too,
The flowers grow anod in the wind.

Flowers and the wind ,
Flowers anod over the graves of the dead ,
Petals of red , leaves of yellow , streaks of white ,
Masses of purple sagging ...

I love you and your great way of forgetting.

NEVER TO KNOW
by Sara Bard Field

Never to know that we do not know :
This it will be if death is the end ;
Never to say “ it is over" and so
Feel our escape and quietly spend
A motionless moment in conscious peace,
Knowing the ecstasy of release.

PRIESTS
by James Oppenheim

Priests are in bad odor,
And yet there shall be no lack of them ...
The skies shall not lack a spokesman,
Nor the spirit of man a voice and a gesture .

Not garbed nor churched ,
Yet, as of old, in loneliness and anguish ,
They shall come eating and drinking among us ,
With scourge, pity , and prayer.

FREEDOM
by Ralph Chaplin

Up on the lookout, in the wind and sleet;
Out in the woods of tamarack and pine ;
Down in the hot slopes of the dripping mine,
We dreamed of you, and oh , the dream was sweet !
And now you bless the felon food we eat,
And make each iron cell a sacred shrine ;
For when your love thrills in the blood like wine,
The very stones grow holy to our feet !

We shall be faithful , though we march with death ,
And singing, storm the battlements of wrong :
One's life is such a little thing to give :
So we shall fight as long as we have breath,
Love in our hearts, and on our lips a song :

Without you it were better not to live !

Leavenworth Prison.

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